

Income OF Missionary Societies IN 1917-1918

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CERTAIN FACTS regarding the income of missionary societies during the last year are important not only in themselves but because of what lies behind them. They show that the maintenance of missions is to a large extent ensured; they also throw light upon the reaction of the Christian Church to the influences brought to bear upon it in the furnace of war.

In Great Britain, for instance, where the strain in every department of life has been severe, and where circumstances have been more adverse than in any previous year of war, the financial situation as a whole calls for profound thankfulness. At a meeting of the Secretaries' Association in London, April 17, 1918, out of fifteen missionary societies whose representatives were present, thirteen reported an income larger than that of the previous year, and ten the highest income on record. A wider examination of the finances of British missions — Anglican, Presbyterian, Free Church and interdenominational — shows that the favorable report presented at this meeting applies generally, and in about the same proportion. To

quote only a few examples out of many, the ordinary income of the Church Missionary Society reached the remarkable total of £404,646, the largest ever known in its history; the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society increased its income by £14,681, receiving £7,000 more than was expected; the London Missionary Society for the first time received a sum larger than had been sought from its home constituency, and for the third year in succession shows a considerable balance of receipts over expenditure; and the British and Foreign Bible Society, which issued 9,387,180 volumes of the Scriptures during the year ending March, 1918, reports a record income of £299,230, and an Emergency Fund of over £37,000. A few of the smaller societies are, however, facing accumulated deficits, and some have failed to secure a much-needed increase of income. *In the various statements encouragement is frequently drawn from the fact that increase of income has not for the most part come from legacies or large benefactions, but has flowed in through the ordinary channels of work. Advance in congregational giving is noted again and again. "A wonderful year," "a record year," "an exceedingly good year," "the best year since the war began," "the best year we have ever had" — are phrases taken from the latest financial statements.* Of special interest is the noticeable stir among Jewish missions, which are said to be "evidently coming into their own."

Information just received from Australia shows that in spite of war conditions many of the missionary organizations are able to report considerable advance in income.

Owing to delay in the arrival of expected information concerning North America, it is only possible to say that many boards report an increased income, some a record one, — this, notwithstanding the substantial amount subscribed to Syrian and Armenian relief and various war funds. Large schemes put forward by some of the leading mission boards for the education of their constituencies and the enlargement of their financial resources are meeting with ready support. For example, in connection with the approaching centenary of Methodist missions, the Northern, Southern, and Canadian Methodists are uniting in a great educational and financial campaign which aims at a fund of \$80,000,000; under the leadership of a strong group of Baptist laymen, a fund of \$1,000,000 was raised during the spring of 1918; and the Reformed Church in America has almost completed a fund of \$75,000 for the extension of its work in Amoy. There is evidence that the striking message to mission boards issued by the Committee of Counsel and Reference in June, 1917, which, in view of the challenge of the war, sounded a call to "*regard no effort as too exhausting and no sacrifice as too great*" in order to revitalize missionary agencies and stimulate new and daring advances, has not fallen unheeded to the ground.

Statements from continental missionary societies, as far as they have been received, show that for them also the year has in many cases been one of financial encouragement. The Paris Evangelical Society, though reporting a heavy fall in income from foreign

sources, states that the French Protestant communities have been able in very difficult circumstances to maintain the normal level of their gifts, and that even with an outstanding deficit the mission "looks forward with the greatest confidence" and is working toward its pre-war budget. The Mission Suisse Romande, which has completed the reorganization referred to last year and is now controlled by a committee representative of six churches and associations, closed the year 1917 without deficit, owing largely to decreased expenditure and the increase of receipts from Africa. In Scandinavia, the financial position is reported to be generally satisfactory. The Swedish Church Mission has received an increase of income amounting to 35 per cent; and the Norwegian Missionary Society had in 1917 an income of Kr. 200,000 above that of the preceding year.



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